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PHL 422.01: Environmental Philosophy

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ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY (Phl 422)

Professor: Christopher J. Preston

E-mail: Christopher.Preston@umontana.edu

Class time: Tu, Th, 11.10 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Office hours: Tu, 3.30 – 5.00 p.m., Wed, noon – 2 p.m.

Classroom: LA 146

Office: LA 157

1. Course Introduction:

This course looks in some depth at four discussions that are prominent in the first forty years of environmental philosophy. These include the *wilderness debates*, *intrinsic value theory*, *environmental restoration*, and *climate change and the anthropocene*. The goal is for students with some existing background in ethics to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the most significant work on important contemporary environmental topics. Though environmental philosophy is clearly connected to the practical goal of protecting the environment, the discipline is also a serious theoretical endeavor in its own right. Be prepared to delve deeply into the theoretical aspects but be ready to tie these discussions back into the practical questions.

2. Reading Material (all required reading):

Moodle (umonline.umt.edu) (*The materials on **Moodle** will form the bulk of your required reading this semester. In addition to the readings, I will be posting weblinks and other curricular material there. Please be sure you know how to utilize Moodle).

I request that you come to class having carefully read the material assigned for that day prior to your arrival. This will be a small class with a seminar-type feel. As we talk about the reading, I will seek opinions on various topics and will call upon individuals to answer questions relevant to the reading and lecture. Please be prepared to discuss the positions articulated in the reading and to bring your own questions and concerns to everyone's attention.

3. Reading Assignments (provisional):

Week 1 (Jan 28, 30): "Lone Wolf" – Donnelly. "Wilderness Act" – Congress. "Abstract Wild" – Turner (make a start).

Week 2 (Feb 4, Feb 6): "Abstract Wild" – Turner (ctd.) "Amalgamation" – Nelson. "Revisited" – Callicott.

*****Ethical Autobiography due (Feb 6th)*****

Week 3 (Feb 11, 13): “Reaffirmed” – Rolston. “Intact” – Caro.
Visit by George Nickas (Feb 11th)

Week 4 (Feb 18, 20): “Incarceration” – Birch. “Trouble” – Cronon.

Week 5 (Feb 25, 27): “Challenges” – Rolston. “Conceptual Foundations” – Callicott.

Week 6 (Mar 4, 6): “Environmental Values” – Norton. “Beyond Intrinsic Value” – Weston.

Week 7 (Mar 11, 13): “Intrinsic Value” – McShane. “Pragmatist Intrinsic Value” – Minter.

Week 8 (Mar 18, 20): “Faking Nature” – Elliot. “Further Adventures” – Katz.
“Rambunctious” – Marris.

Week 9 (Mar 25, 27): “Netherlands” – Kolbert. “Apostles” – Cronon. “Authenticity” – Hourdequin.

*****Take-Home Mid-term Due in Class (March 27)*****

SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (Apr 8, 10): “Novel Ecosystems” – Higgs. “Valuing Novel Ecosys” – Light.
Visit by Laurie Yung (April 10th)

Week 11 (Apr 15, 17): “Restoration Restored” – Chapman, “Conservation Future” – Doak.

Week 12 (Apr 22, 24): “End of Nature” – McKibben. “Perfect Moral Storm” – Gardiner.
Visit by Pat Burke (April 24th)

Week 13 (Apr 29, May 1): “Atmospheric Restoration” – Jackson Salzman, “Social and Ethical” – Corner and Pidgeon, “Ethics and Politics” – Keith.

*****Last day for Extra-curricular assignment, May 1st*****

Week 14 (May 6, 9): “Beyond the End of Nature” – Preston. “After the End of Nature” – Vogel.

*****Term paper due at noon on Monday, May 12th*****

4. Course Requirements:

- a) Attendance, participation, and scholarly attitude will account for 15% of your grade (15 points). I will be taking a mental note of attendance and shall be keeping track of your participation during the class. If you need to miss class at some point in the semester, please let me know by e-mail ahead of time if possible. If you cannot let me know before class, please e-mail me as soon as you can afterwards. When appropriate you should bring some form of verification for your absence to the next class.
- b) Environmental Ethics Autobiographical essay (5 points). On Thursday, Feb 6th students should bring a 3-page narrative piece detailing the origin of their views concerning the natural environment. Think back to your early influences and identify the values, principles, and ethical considerations you have incorporated into your worldview. Show how this framework influences today your thoughts on the natural environment.
- c) Non-curricular event (5 points). You are required to attend at least one extra-curricular event (on or off campus) on topics related to our course material. The event could be a lecture, a debate, a public forum, a city council meeting, etc. etc. Your event may not be a movie unless there is a focused discussion following it in which you take part. After attending the event, you should turn in to me within a week a two-page summary of the experience. Your summary should include a) a description of the event content, b) some connections to the topics we are discussing, and c) a sentence or two on your opinion of the quality of the talk. The deadline for the non-curricular event requirement is Thursday, May 1st.
- d) Office visit (5 points). Everyone should make at least one office visit **before spring break**. You can use this visit for any reason you like. I need to check in with you at least once before the break to see how things are going.
- e) Mid-term Exam (25 points). There will a take home reading test before spring break. The test is designed to examine your knowledge and comprehension of the reading and lecture. At the end of each week of reading, I will be posting a summary topic list from the previous week's classes. Go over this list before we move onto the next week to see that you have grasped the main points. Go back to the list again as the reading test approaches.
- f) Classroom Topic Contributions (10 points). I want you all to be personally invested in at least some portion of our reading this semester. Undergraduate Students are required to come to class at least once during the semester with a news item or magazine article to prompt discussion on some topic connected to our work. If you would like me to copy the article or post it online on Moodle, be sure to provide me the material in good time. Graduate Students will be responsible for taking one of the assigned readings from weeks 6, 7, or 8 and leading class discussion that day. Your task will be to identify the chief points in the reading and to tie the issues discussed into topics we have been covering throughout the semester.

g) Final Assignment (35 points). You must write a 7-10 page term paper on an environmental topic that draws on material presented after the spring break (12-14 pages for graduate students). This material on restoration, climate, and the anthropocene should also weave in discussion topics from earlier in the semester. The paper will be due on Monday, May 12th at noon as an attachment to an e-mail. (Please submit in MS Word format).

Extra Credit:

i) Additional non-curricular events written up according to the same criteria as the required event will be worth 2 extra-credit points up to a maximum of 4. Suitable events can be found posted on flyers around campus, in the *Missoulian*, the *Kaimen*, the *Independent*, and on the website <http://events.umt.edu>. If you hear of a suitable upcoming campus event, you should feel free to mention it at the start of class. (You may not use an event that you are required to attend for another class).

ii) Additional office visits beyond the one required visit are worth one extra credit point (up to a limit of 2).

iii) For undergrads, additional news stories are worth one point (up to a limit of 2)

5. Additional remarks:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS) (243-2243). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. Please let me know as soon as possible about any assistance I might be able to offer. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

I encourage you to use my office hours. I am paid to help you with this class! Use e-mail to stay in touch. If you find interesting material throughout the semester that you would like to share with your classmates, I would be happy to post it on Moodle. Use of smart phones or other web-enabled devices is prohibited during class time. We all need to be focused on reading and discussion.

Finally I also expect you to contribute **positively** to our small community of learning. This means being respectful of those around you in the class at all times, including myself. You are expected to attend class, to not disrupt those around you unnecessarily, and to stay for the duration of each class period. I also expect complete academic integrity with every assignment. With your help and everybody's mutual support, this class will be challenging, stimulating, and – I hope – a valuable contribution to your intellectual path.